

6 July 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Deputy to the Director for National Intelligence

FROM : [REDACTED] National Intelligence Officer for Africa

SUBJECT : Assessment of Cuban and African Reactions to a US
Diplomatic Initiative re Angola and Mozambique

1. Action Requested: That you approve and forward the attached Agency assessment to Ambassador Young, together with the cover memorandum we have drafted for your signature.

2. Background: When Ambassador Young lunched with you on 27 June, he asked what the prospects might be for a US diplomatic initiative toward Castro, Neto and Savimbi to bring about a compromise settlement in Angola. In the Ambassador's concept, such a move could lead to a reduction in the Cuban military presence in Angola and to the exercise of some degree of moderation by Castro in regard to sending troops to Mozambique, or even Ethiopia. The attached assessment responds to this request: we believe the reaction of the parties in Angola would be negative at this time, and that Castro would see no merit in such an initiative unless his position in Angola had deteriorated substantially beyond where it is now. We see no signs that the USSR would find compromise attractive, either.

3. Recommendation: That you approve the assessment and send it to Ambassador Young [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Attachments

APPROVED: See /
Director of Central Intelligence

DISAPPROVED: _____
Director of Central Intelligence

MORI/CDF

DATE: _____

[REDACTED]

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Approved For Release 2006/09/25 : CIA-RDP79R00603A002800080001-6
The Director
Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

ER 77-8239/1

18 July 1977

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

I am attaching an appreciation by our analysts in CIA regarding the Angolan and Cuban reactions that could be expected to a US diplomatic initiative of the kind you outlined during our lunch on 27 June. I'm afraid the prospects at this time do not appear bright to our people, but I believe that their discussion of the factors involved may be helpful to you nonetheless.

We very much appreciate these opportunities to share in your thinking; please call upon us again if you have further questions.

Sincerely,



STANSFIELD TURNER

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Attachment

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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Assessment of Cuban and African Reactions to a US
Diplomatic Initiative re Angola and Mozambique

SUMMARY

This is not an optimum time for a US initiative to achieve a compromise in Angola and moderation of Cuban activities in Mozambique. In Angola, while there is talk of compromise in the wake of the abortive coup of 27 May, Neto's terms toward UNITA do not appear to have changed, and Savimbi, enjoying new successes, is preparing for a longer term struggle to overthrow Neto rather than bring him to compromise.

The Cubans, we believe, still see themselves as architects of a new socialist state in Angola, and would view a compromise settlement there as destroying much of what they are working for in Africa and the Third World generally. The Cubans thus would force Neto to the conference table only if the military situation became desperate. A few months from now, the African factors might be more amenable, but the Cubans (and Soviets) would be more open to compromise only if their position had meanwhile deteriorated very seriously.

* * * *

African Reaction to a US Initiative

1. We doubt that the African elements in the Angola situation could be brought to accept compromise easily at this time, unless possibly the US initiative could be presented as a dramatic "diplomatic revolution," come simultaneously and seriously from Havana as well as Washington, and have a bag of economic aid attached. This would be an offer hard to resist, but the chances of Havana's participation seem very slight.

2. The abortive coup in Luanda has certainly put the idea of compromise in the air, however. According to a Portuguese interpretation, based on a first hand report to President Eanes by an emissary who visited Luanda in late June, the events of 27 May amounted to a purge of Neto's left-wing enemies, and with these people out Neto is now free to pursue a more openly moderate, generally non-aligned course. The MPLA is also supposed to have put out feelers to the

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leaderships of both UNITA and the FNLA, but it is said to be recognized in Luanda that there is "too much bad blood" between Neto and Savimbi. This kind of pro-compromise analysis also draws on the idea that Neto is now extremely suspicious of the Soviets -- whether or not they really tried to help Alves -- and is now looking to the West for support at least to balance them and the Cubans.

3. There may be merit in this line of thinking, but we believe it is ahead of where the game stands. As we see it, Neto's immediate need from his perspective is to reestablish his authority over the MPLA. The perception on the part of black radical elements in the MPLA that Neto has catered to mulatto and foreign elements was the major factor behind the disturbances of 27 May. He needs now to demonstrate effectiveness not only in bringing dissidents in his own ranks to heel, but also be coping more effectively than heretofore with the insurgents, especially Savimbi. The Cuban reinforcements that have arrived almost certainly are to help him do this, as well as to defend against attack from Zaire. Until this task is accomplished, Neto cannot afford to appear to be dealing from weakness, even if he goes down in the process.

4. Savimbi's present situation is the other side of the coin. He is enjoying successes unprecedented since the height of the civil war. His forces have the Cubans and FAPLA cooped up in the towns inside UNITA's southern zone of influence; his survival has attracted or seems about to attract further foreign support, from Zaire, South Africa and possibly elsewhere; he has plans both for an attack on FAPLA-held southern towns and for a northern offensive aiming to open a supply corridor to Zaire and, ultimately, to carry guerrilla warfare into Neto's home territories. Savimbi apparently is preparing for a protracted struggle, and all reporting indicates that he has revised his objectives so that he now aims to overthrow or oust Neto entirely rather than to force a compromise.

5. We doubt that Savimbi will be able to accomplish all of these objectives -- in fact, we do not believe that, short of an MPLA collapse, UNITA can expand its zone of influence very far beyond its present territorial limits. But it will take some time, possibly as long as six months, for Savimbi to either realize his limitations or to prove us wrong. If he should prove us wrong, he will be even less inclined to consider compromise than he is now, because he will really have Neto on the run and the effect of an initiative from us would appear to him as a misguided effort to save the Communists' bacon. If we turn out to be right about his prospects, Savimbi should be a good deal more open to suggestions for compromise several months hence; but the moment would have to be chosen with care -- the danger is that by that time Neto would feel strong enough to turn us aside, assuming that he still had Cuban support. In Angola, we are not easily going to reach a point where the local parties

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will be willing to deal rather than keep going for the whole bag. In particular, we do not think that the US could "deliver" Savimbi to the conference table at this time.

6. The reaction of the Machel government in Mozambique would likely be mixed. Machel would resent and resist an initiative that appeared to put restraints on whom he could invite to help in the struggle against Rhodesia and defend his own country from Rhodesian attack. If, however, this aspect could be veiled or, better yet, accompanied by some positive action on our part to assist the Zimbabwe liberation process, we believe that Machel would not find the initiative too painful to swallow. Whatever their rhetoric, we would certainly have the help of the other front-line presidents (except Neto, who does not really count much in this situation at this point). The presence of foreign troops makes all of the presidents nervous, to some degree, and they have no interest in allowing the action in regard to Rhodesia to slip away from them, as it would surely do if Cubans came to Mozambique in force. But they see no way to avoid this happening unless there is some real movement on the Rhodesia front, and at the moment there is little they can point to. Again, a period several months from now, when the next round of British Foreign Secretary Owen's negotiations will either be showing signs of success or will have been supplanted by some more forceful initiative against Smith, would appear to be a more propitious time.

7. The problem in the interval would be to find means to enable Machel better to defend himself politically from the effects of Rhodesian military and counter-guerrilla action. The UN resolution this week is one such means; encouragement to US and European humanitarian organizations to play a more active role in the refugee camps might be another. Token military help from other African states is still another possibility, but it would need logistic or other support to be politically believable (the Nigerians, for example, could not make it on their own). But we might also have to turn a blind eye to some Cuban presence, if it is limited to helping with anti-aircraft or other defenses of the guerrilla or FRELIMO camps. The Rhodesians avoid attacking well-defended camps, and Machel's people must have observed this; there is no real substitute for military aid.

8. To sum up, the present would not seem to be an optimum time for a US initiative of the kind suggested. Some months from now probably would be better, at least from the African aspect, although there is certainly no guarantee even then.

Cuban Reaction to a US Initiative

9. Fidel Castro would almost certainly reject a US proposal that placed Cuba in the position of forcing Angolan President Neto to the conference table unless the military situation became desperate. In Havana's view, such an arrangement would render meaningless the basic thrust of its foreign policy

efforts in the third world. In the present circumstances, Cuba would perceive such a move as beneficial only to the US.

10. Havana is concerned over the deteriorating situation in Angola, but it does not yet view the problem as untenable. Moreover, the economic burden of the intervention is relatively small and not yet an important constraint on Cuban policy makers, even though the Cuban populace has an exaggerated view of the impact of Angola on the national economy. The Cuban force in Angola represents only a tiny fraction of the island's labor force and most of Havana's costs are borne by the USSR.

11. Havana's commitment to the Neto regime goes beyond military protection; the Cubans see themselves as architects of a new socialist state. Several thousand Cuban political experts and economic technicians -- in addition are the Cuban military personnel -- are involved in the construction of a Marxist, anti-imperialist nation. Therefore, in Castro's eyes, a compromise settlement would essentially destroy much of what the Cubans are working for.

12. In Castro's view, the mere appearance of a Cuba-US forced settlement would seriously undermine his influence and prestige in the third world. Since Castro came to power, his foreign policy has been based on the fundamental thesis that the US is Cuba's main enemy. This stems in part from Castro's passion to be a major figure on the world stage, and in part from the realities of the Cuban geopolitical situation. Only 90 miles from a superpower, the Cuban leader believes that even under favorable circumstances maintaining the small island's independence requires a constant struggle to avoid being swallowed up and transformed into a mere appendage.

13. An essential tactic of this struggle has been the fostering of leftist regimes which, while lacking military power, are sufficiently numerous to exert some influence on Washington. Havana will not be satisfied to depend exclusively on Soviet military might; time has not erased the memory of Moscow's withdrawal of strategic missiles in 1962 without consulting the Cuban leadership. Castro probably would perceive a negotiated settlement as likely to produce an Angolan government far more friendly with the US. Given this mindset, the Cuban leader would probably view such an outcome as equivalent to a defeat rather than a fortunate escape from an Angolan morass.

14. Operating with this orientation, Havana probably would be extremely reluctant to compound such a defeat in Angola by also reducing its support for Mozambique and/or Ethiopia. Castro has shown a particular interest in becoming more involved in the struggle against the white minority regimes in Rhodesia and South Africa. So far, such an expanded involvement has been prevented by Cuba's heavy commitments in Angola and by the reluctance of the frontline states. If Cuba were relieved of its military burden in Angola, a significant intervention in Mozambique would become more rather than less attractive.

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15. In Angola itself, Fidel Castro appears fully committed to sticking it out with Neto for the time being. Cuban troops played a key role in quelling the uprising on 27 May. So far, there has been no evidence that the Cubans are looking for an alternative to President Neto.

16. Assuming continued Soviet backing for Cuba's presence in Angola, and we have no reason to question this backing, the Cuban leadership could be expected to respond positively to such an initiative only if:

- President Neto abandoned his opposition to a negotiated settlement;
- The Cuban troops — even with additional forces — were unable to cope with the insurgency.

17. In summary, even if the time comes when the Cuban leadership feels obliged to push Neto toward forming a coalition with Savimbi or other opposition guerrilla leaders, it is extremely unlikely that Havana would want to work in concert with the US on the matter.

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Cover memo: TO: Ambassador Andrew Young
FROM: DCI

Cover memo: TO: DCI
FROM: NIO/AF

O/DCI/NIO/AF:

Original: Addressee

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